discipline rationalization of excise and import duties to lighten the burden on the poor; freeze on central issue prices under the targeted public distribution system (TPDS) for wheat and rice; import of wheat to augment supply in the Southern zone; and regular monitoring of retail and wholesale prices of essential commodities.

Loans to farmers

*548. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY:
DR. VIJAY MALLYA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have approved the release of Rs. 195.66 crores to enable farmers to get refinance facility from NABARD and renew loans to needy farmers;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the amount released and utilised so far for various purposes?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM): (a) The Government of Andhra Pradesh has accorded administrative sanction on 11th March 2005 for additional share capital to nine District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) to the extent of their negative net worth of Rs. 195.66 crore for investment in Statutory Liquidity Ratio (SLR) bonds. Infusion of this amount has enabled them to meet the eligibility criteria for refinance by NABARD.

(b) The following DCCBs were the recipients of Rs. 195.66 crore:—

SI. No.	Name of DCCB	Amount (Rs. Crore)
1.	Srikakulam DCCB	12.55
2.	Vizianagarm DCCB	26.45
3.	Nellore DCCB	30.74
4.	Kadapa DCCB	26.30
5.	Mahbubnagar DCCB	15.33
6.	Karimnagar DCCB	18.43
7.	Medak DCCB	26.60
8.	Warangal DCCB	30.36
9.	Kumool DCCB	8.90
	TOTAL	195.66

(c) The State Government has released the amount of Rs. 195.66 crore and the nine DCCBs have kept them as deposits in Andhra Pradesh State Cooperative Bank Ltd. as Statutory Liquidity Ratio.

Scheme for repertory theatre group

*549. SHRI PENUMALLI MADHU: Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any scheme for supporting the repertory theatre groups in the country;

(b) if so, the number of repertory theatre groups are supported under this scheme;

(c) whether it is a fact that a few leading theatre groups have not been receiving grant for the last two years; and

(d) if so, what is Government's reaction thereon?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKASONI): (a) Ministry of Tourism* Culture, Department of Culture is supporting repertory theatre groups under the Schemes of (i) Financial Assistance to Professional Groups and Individuals for Specified Performing Art Projects; and (ii) Building Grant to Cultural Organizations.

(b) A total of 239 repertory theatre groups were supported under these schemes in the year 2005-06.

(c) and (d) All theatre groups selected for receiving grants are being given financial assistance regularly and there has been no change in this position in the two years.

Shortfall in collection of education cess

*550. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the revenue receipts from the two per cent education cess in the first eight months of current fiscal at Rs. 2,400 crore have been only a third of the budgeted yearly estimates of Rs. 6,975 crore;